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INFO RUEHSI/AMEMBASSY TBILISI PRIORITY 3850
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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 005044

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/14/2017

TAGS: [KNNP](#) [PARM](#) [ENRG](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [GG](#) [IAEA](#) [RS](#)

SUBJECT: REMOVAL OF HIGH-THREAT RADIOACTIVE SOURCES FROM
THE ABKHAZIA REGION

REF: STATE 137084

Classified By: EST Counselor Colin Cleary for reasons 1.4(b/d).

¶1. (C) Summary: Rosatom and MFA officials tell us they are not aware of any plans by Rosatom Director Kiriyenko, or anyone else at Rosatom, to build a nuclear storage facility in Abkhazia to dispose of high threat radioactive sources. We urged that the GOR intervene with the de facto Abkhazian leadership to allow the removal of the material to the Mtskheta site near Tbilisi. Russian officials were non-committal. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Embassy raised the issue of the removal of high threat radioactive sources from Abkhazia (ref) separately with both Vladimir Kuchinov, Director of Rosatom's International Department, and Mikhail Kondratenkov, Nuclear Affairs officer in MFA's Disarmament and Security Department (DVBR), on October 10. Both told us they were unaware of any plans for Russia to build a nuclear storage facility in Abkhazia.

¶3. (C) Kuchinov said Russia shares U.S. concern for proper storage of such material. He was generally aware of the facilities and knew they were in poor condition. Rosatom has been in communication with the two institutes. Kuchinov agreed that it would be "much better" if the material were removed. He endeavored to get clarification regarding who, if anyone, may have told the Abkhaz de facto leadership that Russia had an interest in building a facility there. We urged that the GOR approach the Abkhaz de facto authorities to get them to agree to remove the material to the Mtskheta facility. Kuchinov was non-committal.

¶4. (C) MFA's Kondratenkov also told us he would seek clarification. He commented that given the region's instability, control of highly radioactive sources is of great interest to the GOR. As with Kuchinov, we urged that the GOR communicate to the Abkhaz de facto leadership GOR support for moving the sources to the Mtskheta facility quickly. Kondratenkov was also non-committal, but promised to relay our information to his superiors. He asked whether the October 2006 agreement was in writing.

¶5. (C) In a follow up conversation on October 17, Embassy informed Kondratenkov that the agreement was a verbal one. We again urged that the GOR use its influence to get the Abkhaz de facto leadership to move this dangerous material to Mtskheta as agreed.

¶6. (C) Comment: We will continue to follow up and report back any additional information.
Burns